



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

CHRIST-CENTERED, KINGDOM-FOCUSED HOMES



Bible Reading Plan Journal

July 2022

Why we have a church-wide Bible reading plan: God speaks to people through His Word. It is what He uses to transform our lives by revealing truth to us and aligning our heart toward what He loves. The aim of this reading plan is not to merely check a box off a list, but to encourage our church body to spend time hearing from God. Reading the Bible is critical to a Christian's growth. But it is especially powerful to read the Bible with others. This reading plan is the basis for all of our D-Groups, and we hope it fosters deeper spiritual conversations in our families and between our members.

How you can use this booklet: Each day has a passage of Scripture for you to read. There are one to two questions to prompt your study of the passage. We encourage the H.E.A.R. method for reading Scripture, especially if it is a new discipline for you. First, highlight a verse or verses that speak to you from the passage. Then, explain what those verses mean in relation to the broader context and how they support the main idea the author is trying to communicate. Next, apply this verse to your everyday life. What does this passage teach us about God? How does this passage point you to your need for Jesus? How do your thoughts, emotions, or actions need to change in light of this passage? Application should always be done in a spirit of prayer, as you are asking God to reveal to you how it applies. Finally, respond. This may be a specific action God is leading you to do. Very often it will be a prayer, either of thanksgiving, of confession of sin, or of petition asking for God's help.

Each new section in the biblical book is preceded by an introduction to help you focus on some key ideas of that book. There is also a general outline to that section to help you keep the overall context in mind as you read each day. This is important for every book of Scripture, but it is especially important for the larger books in the Bible.

Memory Verse: Because Scripture is God's Word, it is important that a Christian spend regular time memorizing God's Word so that he or she can always find encouragement and guidance from God. This month's memory passage is provided on the next page in the ESV, NIV, and NLT.

Psalm 23:5-6**ESV**

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

NIV

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

NLT

5 You prepare a feast for me
in the presence of my enemies.
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.
6 Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house of the LORD
forever.

Explain:

What is the author saying about the spiritual state of Israel through the narrative in ch. 17-18? What aspects of the story reveal this?

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The key refrain in this section of Judges is “In those days there was no king in Israel.” The book clearly serves to show that Israel needs a king or else they devolve into spiritual rebellion. This message stands in tension with Samuel-Kings which show that even under the rule of kings, Israel is not necessarily any more obedient to God than during the time of the judges. Therefore, Judges through Kings, taken as a whole, show that Israel is always bound to and judged by the Mosaic covenant, no matter what their political make up might be. What matters most of all is their obedience to God and their leader’s ability to encourage that obedience.

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Day 1 | **Judges 17-18**

Apply:

The religiosity depicted here is a corrupted form of Yahweh worship.
What happens when we do things our own way rather than God's way?

Respond:

Explain:

What is the significance of the city where they spend the night?

This passage is an obvious parallel to Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19:1-11. What is the effect of the similarities between this story and Sodom and Gomorrah?

Day 2 | **Judges 19**

Apply:

This is perhaps the most disturbing story in all of the Bible. Consider its place in the book of Judges and the overall point of the book. In light of that, according to this book, what is the ultimate cause for such wickedness? How does that help you understand wickedness today?

Respond:

Explain:

How is God at work in these chapters?

What sort of moral judgments are we expected to make of Israel based on these chapters?

Day 3 | **Judges 20-21**

Apply:

How could things have become so bad for God's people?

Respond:

Introduction to the book of Ruth

If the book of Judges details how evil darkens Israel more and more, then Ruth is a bright light in that moral darkness. Despite not having a proper antagonist, it is a powerful story of love and faithfulness. And although it is short, it is by no means simple; it is full of deep theological meaning.

Ruth is a great example that a single biblical narrative can have multiple layers of meaning and therefore a rich variety of application. It at first appears to be a story of what it means to love your neighbor. Most scholars suggest the primary theme of the narrative is “hesed,” a Hebrew word typically translated as kindness or loyal love. And this would be true if the story ended at 4:16. But it doesn’t. The book ends by showing that Ruth is the great-grandmother to King David. That seems to be the original purpose of the book: to point toward King David and show the godliness of his family lineage.

But this purpose brings out a couple other significant details of the narrative. Ruth is repeatedly referred to “the Moabite.” The reader is constantly reminded that Ruth is not a Israelite. She is an outsider to God’s covenant. And yet it is through her that God will establish the lineage to the messiah. Secondly, this story occurs in the time of the judges. It serves as a testimony of hope that, even in times of moral decay, God is providentially at work in and through his people, who faithfully love others in everyday ways.

Book Outline: Ruth

- I. Introduction: Famine & Death (1:1-5)
- II. Naomi & Ruth Return to Israel (1:6-22)
- III. Ruth in the Fields of Boaz (2:1-23)
- IV. Ruth at Boaz's Threshing Floor (3:1-18)
- V. Boaz Redeems Ruth (4:1-17)
- VI. Conclusion: Genealogy (4:18-22)

Explain:

Ruth begins with “in the days when the judges ruled...” Why is this historical context significant for the book as a whole?

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: The names in Ruth serve important literary functions. Bethlehem means :
: “house of bread,” yet ironically there is a famine there. Mahlon probably means :
: something like “sickly,” and Chilion probably means something like “frail.” :
: Their names foreshadow their untimely deaths. Finally, Elimelech means “my :
: God is king,” and yet in his time of need, this man leaves the land of promise to :
: live in Moab, one of Israel’s neighbors. Most scholars interpret their leaving :
: during a time of famine as a suggestion of their lack of trust in God. :
:

Day 4 | Ruth 1-2

Apply:

Ruth, despite her poverty, shows great love to Naomi. Boaz, using his great wealth, shows great love to Ruth. How do these chapters shed light on what it means to love your neighbor? How can you do similarly today?

Respond:

Explain:

Who is the hero of this story? Why?

Day 5 | **Ruth 3-4**

Apply:

God is hardly mentioned in this book. How do you know he is at work in this narrative? What implications does that have for your own life?

Respond:

Introduction to the book of Samuel

Although two books in our Bibles, 1-2 Samuel actually are one book, which details a transition in the history of Israel from a decentralized tribal structure to a centralized monarchy. The book focuses on three main characters: Samuel, Saul, and David. Samuel serves as a judge but then as a prophet to anoint and warn the kings of Israel. Saul is the first king of Israel; generally speaking, he is a failed king. Although his reign begins with success, it falls apart because of his refusal to obey God. God then chooses David to be the second king of Israel, and he serves as an example of what a godly king should be like. In fact, often the narrator portrays David as doing what a king should do, even before he officially becomes king.

However, we would misread the book by simply labeling Saul as bad and David as good. The narrative is far more realistic than that. Saul seems hesitant to become king, perhaps recognizing the dangerous responsibility of leadership. And through him, God does bring salvation to Israel (1 Sam. 11:13). Conversely, the narrator shows us David's worst flaws: vengeance, abuse of power, adultery, murder, and moral negligence.

That brings us to a central idea of the book. There will always be a crisis of leadership within Israel, whether ruled by judges or kings, when leaders forsake God. They too answer to God. But when they submit to God's covenant, God can and does work salvation through them for the sake of his people. This points ultimately to the true King of Israel, who was totally obedient to God, defeated the people's enemies, and through whom God worked salvation, Jesus Christ.

Book Outline: 1 Samuel

- I. The Birth, Call, and Ministry of Samuel (1:1-7:17)
 - A. Samuel's birth and the rejection of Eli (1:1-2:36)
 - B. Samuel's Call (3:1-21)
 - C. The Story of the Ark of God (4:1-6:21)
 - 1. The Ark Captured (4:1-22)
 - 2. God Plagues the Philistines (5:1-12)
 - 3. The Ark Returned (6:1-21)
- II. Institution of the Monarchy: the Story of Saul (8:1-15:35)
 - A. The Demand for a King (8:1-22)
 - B. The Choosing and Anointing of Saul (9:1-10:27)
 - C. Saul's First Victory (11:1-15)
 - D. Samuel's Warning to Israel and Its King (12:1-25)
 - E. Saul's Disobedience and Folly (13:1-15:35)
- III. The Rise of David and the Downfall of Saul (16:1-31:13)
 - A. David's Anointing (16:1-13)
 - B. David's Victories and Saul's Jealousy (17:1-18:30)
 - C. Saul Seeks to Kill David (19:1-26:25)
 - D. Saul's Final Battle Against the Philistines (27:1-31:13)

Samuel: The Birth, Call, and Ministry of Samuel

Day 1 | **Samuel 1:1-2:11**

Explain:

Hannah's prayer in 2:1-10 provides a theological interpretation of her own story and the birth of her son: "The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn" (v. 5). What does this situation and this prayer reveal about God's character? Based on this passage, what other life situations are similar to Hannah's?

Hannah's prayer foreshadows many of the key themes that will occur throughout 1-2 Samuel. Summarize the key ideas in her prayer.

Day 1 | **Samuel 1:1-2:11**

Apply:

What truth about God stands out to you from this passage? How does it
relate to your own life?

Respond:

Samuel: The Birth, Call, and Ministry of Samuel

Day 2 | **1 Samuel 2:12-3**

Explain:

What was wrong with what Eli's sons were doing? How does God plan to address their sin?

Day 2 | **1 Samuel 2:12-3**

Apply:

“...for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed” (2:30). What relevance does this truth have for your life today?

Respond:

Explain:

It is typical for narrative to make a clear point without coming right out and saying it. The point of 4:1-10 is to condemn Israel's actions in this instance. What did they do that was wrong in God's eyes? How does the story convey that?

Day 3 | **1 Samuel 4-5**

Apply:

God can defeat his enemies on his own. He doesn't need Israel to fight for him, and he certainly won't let them use him as a good luck charm.

How does this apply to your life today?

Respond:

Samuel: The Birth, Call, and Ministry of Samuel

Day 4 | **1 Samuel 6-8**

Explain:

Throughout 1-2 Samuel, the Philistines will be a constant threat to Israel. How does Israel defeat the Philistines in ch. 7?

In light of how God acts in ch. 7, what is so bad about the people asking for a king in ch. 8?

Day 4 | **1 Samuel 6-8**

Apply:

Because we live in a republic, it may seem strange to us that Israel asked for a king and a monarchy. How does this story apply to us today then even though our government is much different today?

Respond:

Explain:

What should a king do?

Ch. 8 taught that in asking for a king, Israel had rejected God. Why then does God not only allow them a king but pick a specific individual for the role?

Day 5 | **1 Samuel 9**

Apply:

Respond:

Samuel: Institution of the Monarchy

Day 1 | **1 Samuel 10-11**

Explain:

What should a king do?

Based on Saul's words and actions in these chapters, how do you think he feels about being anointed king over Israel?

Day 1 | **1 Samuel 10-11**

Apply:

Respond:

Samuel: Institution of the Monarchy

Day 2 | **1 Samuel 12-13**

Explain:

What is the evil that the people have done? Why is it evil?

What connection do you see between ch. 12 and 13:1-15?

Day 2 | **1 Samuel 12-13**

Apply:

Israel's relationship with God is still determined by their obedience to the Mosaic covenant, regardless of their having a king. The king himself is subject to those same stipulations. What does it mean for you to serve the Lord with all your heart today (12:20)? What things distract you from that?

Respond:

Explain:

In contrast to Saul, Jonathan acts like the king of Israel should. How does he do this? In what way does Saul fail?

Day 3 | 1 Samuel 14

Apply:

The key point of faith in this chapter is Jonathan's belief that "nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few" (v. 6). How are you living your life in light of that truth?

Respond:

Samuel: The Rise of David and the Downfall of Saul

Day 4 | **1 Samuel 15-16**

Explain:

Why is Saul rejected as king of Israel?

What are the similarities and differences between Saul and David?

Day 4 | **1 Samuel 15-16**

Apply:

If the Lord “looks on the heart” (v. 7), what does he see in yours?

Respond:

Samuel: The Rise of David and the Downfall of Saul

Day 5 | **1 Samuel 17**

Explain:

How are Saul and David contrasted in this chapter?

Day 5 | **1 Samuel 17**

Apply:

David points to the true king of Israel, who defeated the greatest enemies of God's people, sin and death. How are you looking to Jesus today as your defense and your protector?

Respond:

Samuel: The Rise of David and the Downfall of Saul

Day 1 | **1 Samuel 18**

Explain:

What emotions does Saul feel in this passage? How are they connected to the events of the story?

Day 1 | **1 Samuel 18**

Apply:

How do your emotions signal areas of temptation in your own heart and life?

Respond:

Samuel: The Rise of David and the Downfall of Saul

Day 2 | **1 Samuel 19-20**

Explain:

Describe Saul's character based on these chapters.

How would you describe Jonathan?

Day 2 | **1 Samuel 19-20**

Apply:

David and Jonathan exemplify the qualities of spiritual friendship. How would you describe their relationship? How are you pursuing something like this in your own life?

Respond:

Samuel: The Rise of David and the Downfall of Saul

Day 3 | **1 Samuel 21-22**

Explain:

David flees to a few different places, two of which belonged to Israel's neighbors, Philistia and Moab (Gath was a city of the Philistines). What does the narrative communicate through David trying to find refuge outside of Israel?

The massacre at Nob is one of the most tragic in the Bible. What causes this horrible event?

Day 3 | **1 Samuel 21-22**

Apply:

Respond:

Samuel: The Rise of David and the Downfall of Saul

Day 4 | **1 Samuel 23-24**

Explain:

In ch. 23, Saul, David, and the narrator identify God's activity. How does each one describe God's activity?

In ch. 24, David and his men both see God at work but in different ways. How does each one describe God's activity?

Day 4 | **1 Samuel 23-24**

Apply:

How do these chapters shed light on what it means to see God at work today?

Respond:

Explain:

How could David let Saul go when Saul was trying to kill him but then immediately be prepared to kill a man who disrespected him?

Day 5 | 1 Samuel 25

Apply:

In contrast to her fool of a husband, Abigail is a wise woman. What does it mean to be wise according to this chapter? How do you exhibit or cultivate that virtue in your own life?

Respond: